

February 23, 2015

Testimony—HB 6018

Dear Rep. Demicco:

I'm writing you today in the hope that you will provide this information to the Energy and Technology Committee at the public hearing on Feb. 24th.

My name is Maureen Mohyde and I live in Farmington, Connecticut. I have ALS, use a wheelchair full time and require personal care assistance with all ADL and I ADL's. I use a ceiling track lift for transfers in the bathroom and bedroom. I am 61 years old and worked until I went out on disability at age 57.

On a very cold winter morning we woke up to discover we had no heat in the house. The temperature was already down to 45°. My life partner, Liane, quickly covered me with an extra down comforter and told me to stay in bed while she contacted. The customer service rep told her that it was a very busy morning, due to very low outdoor temperatures and many no heat calls. Liane asked whether our call could be prioritized due to my health conditions. She told the customer service rep that it was not possible for me to simply go to someone else's home because it would not be able to get in with my wheelchair, nor would I be able to use the bathroom without my lift. She was told that there is no medical priority accommodation. The representative offered to make a note on the ticket in the hope that the technician might be able to get there sooner.

Without knowing when the heat would be restored, Liane

called my sister, who lives one hour away, and asked her to take me out to Starbucks, where I would be warm. We would just need to return home every time I needed to use the bathroom. Our heat was restored later that day.

Following a stressful experience, I contacted Rep. Demicco to urge that something be done about this problem. His staff did a terrific job in contacting Connecticut Natural Gas and finding out that they do have a process for prioritizing medical emergencies. This information did not appear on their website.

Based upon this experience i strongly urge you to require utility companies to keep a medical priority list for customers whose medical conditions can make the lack of service a life-threatening event. Further, that utility companies be required to publish relevant information on their websites and train their customer service staff to be aware of the medical priority.

Maureen Mohyde
12 Larchwood West
Unionville, CT 06085